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LISTS

These 15 Billionaires Own America's News Media Companies

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Washington Post executive editor Martin Baron and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who owns the Washington Post, on stage at the Post's "Transformers" conference in May 2016. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

News that billionaire Peter Thiel is funding Hulk Hogan's trial against news website Gawker set the media and technology worlds on fire last week, sparking a conversation about the ultra-wealthy's role in controlling the news. While a billionaire secretly funding a lawsuit to take down a news outlet may be a new way of using money to influence the media business, billionaires have long exerted influence on the news simply by owning U.S. media outlets.

Some billionaires, like Rupert Murdoch and Michael Bloomberg are longtime media moguls who made their fortunes in the news business. Others, like Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, bought publications as a side investment after building a substantial fortune in another industry. Billionaires own part or all of several of America's influential national newspapers, including The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and the New York Times , in addition to magazines, local papers and online publications.

Several other billionaires, including Comcast CEO Brian Roberts and Liberty Media Chairman John Malone, own or control cable TV networks that are powerful but not primarily news focused.

Here's a look at some of the billionaires who own news media in the United States:

Michael Bloomberg - Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Media

Michael Bloomberg, the richest billionaire in the media business, returned to his eponymous media company in September 2014, eight months after stepping down as mayor of New York City. One notable sign of his influence on the publication: Michael Bloomberg doesn't appear on Bloomberg's Billionaires Index. FORBES pegs his net worth at $45.7 billion. Bloomberg cofounded his financial data company in 1981 with Charles Zegar and Thomas Secunda, both of whom are now

billionaires as well thanks to their minority equity stakes in Bloomberg LP. The company expanded into business news coverage and has more than 2,000 reporters around the world. In 2009, Bloomberg LP bought Business Week magazine from McGraw Hill for a reported $5 million plus assumption of debt.

Rupert Murdoch - News Corp

Rupert Murdoch, former CEO of 21st Century Fox , the parent of powerhouse cable TV channel Fox News, may well be the world's most powerful media tycoon. He is executive co-chairman of 21st Century Fox with his son Lachlan and is also chairman of News Corp, which owns The Wall Street Journal and other publications. Altogether, his family controls 120 newspapers across five countries. Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal also owns 1% of News Corp, after cutting down his holdings from 6% in early 2015.

Donald and Samuel "Si" Newhouse - Advance Publications

Donald Newhouse and his brother Samuel "Si" Newhouse inherited Advance Publications, a privately-held media company that controls a plethora of newspapers, magazine, cable TV and entertainment assets, from their father. Advance owns newspapers in 25 cities and towns across America and is the country's largest privately-held newspaper chain. Conde Nast, a unit of Advance Publications, publishes magazines including Wired, Vanity Fair, The New Yorker and Vogue. Si stepped down as chairman of Conde Nast in 2015.

Cox Family - Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Cox Enterprises , owned by the billionaire Cox family, counts The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and a number of other daily papers among its many media investments. James Cox, the company founder

and grandfather of current chairman Jim Kennedy, bought his first newspaper, the Dayton Ohio Evening News, in 1898. The Cox Media Group Division today owns the Journal-Constitution and six other daily newspapers, more than a dozen non-daily publications, 14 broadcast television stations, one local cable channel and 59 radio stations.

Jeff Bezos - The Washington Post

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos bought The Washington Post for $250 million in 2013. Since beginning his run for president, Trump has accused Bezos of using the Post to get tax breaks for Amazon and sending reporters after Trump. Bezos denied the allegations at a tech conference at the Washington Post in May. The Post's reporters also defended themselves, saying that the paper has covered Amazon's tax problems and that the Post's editorial board's stance on taxing online retailers hasn't changed since Bezos bought the paper.

John Henry - The Boston Globe

Billionaire Red Sox owner John Henry purchased the Boston Globe in October 2013 for $70 million. Henry agreed to purchase the Globe just days after Bezos acquired the Washington Post. The Globe was previously owned by the New York Times for twenty years. At the time of his purchase, Henry said he didn't plan to influence the paper's sports coverage.

Sheldon Adelson - The Las Vegas Review-Journal

In December 2014, Las Vegas casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson secretly bought the Las Vegas Review-Journal. The newspaper's own reporting outed the billionaire buyer, who reportedly arranged the $140 million deal through his son-in-law. Since then, there have been reports of Adelson influencing coverage of himself at a newspaper that in the past was often critical of the billionaire.

Joe Mansueto - Inc. and Fast Company magazines

Morningstar CEO Joe Mansueto made his $2.3 billion fortune at the investment and research firm he founded in 1984. One month after taking Morningstar public in 2005, Mansueto bought Inc. and Fast Company magazine from G&J USA. In a statement at the time, he wrote, "I wasn't looking to buy a magazine. Or two, for that matter....I bought them because I'm passionate about their missions. Their past, present, and future contributions."

Mortimer Zuckerman - US News & World Report, New York Daily News

Real estate billionaire Mortimer Zuckerman is the owner of both US News & World Report and the New York Daily News. Zuckerman serves as chairman and editor-in-chief of U.S. News & World Report, which he bought in 1984. In the years since, US News & World Report has made a name for itself with its lucrative rankings, including Best Colleges, Best Graduate School and Best Hospitals lists. Zuckerman bought the Daily News out of bankruptcy in 1993 and unsuccessfully tried to sell the tabloid newspaper for six months in 2015.

Barbey family - Village Voice

In October 2015, investor Peter Barbey bought the Village Voice, a New York City alternative weekly, through his investment company Black Walnut Holdings LLC for an undisclosed price. Barbey is a member of the billionaire Barbey family, which made its fortune in textiles and manufacturing. In 1989, John Barbey started the Reading Globe and Mitten Manufacturing Company in Pennsylvania. His son J.E. Barbey took the company, which was then known as Vanity Fair Silk Mills, public in 1951 and the family still owns nearly 20% of the

company. The family has also owned a local Pennsylvania paper, The Reading Eagle, for generations.

Stanley Hubbard – Hubbard Broadcasting

Media mogul Stanley Hubbard is CEO of Hubbard Broadcasting, which has 13 TV stations, including a number of ABC and NBC news affiliates in the Midwest, and 48 radio stations. In August, Hubbard bought a stake in PodcastOne, a one-stop shop app for podcasts, through Hubbard Broadcasting. Media runs in Hubbard's family; his father started Minnesota's first commercial TV station in 1923.

Patrick Soon-Shiong - Tribune Publishing Co.

On May 23, Tribune Publishing Co. announced that L.A. doctor and pharmaceutical billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong's Nant Capital was investing $70.5 million into the media company, making Soon-Shiong the second-largest shareholder. He is now the vice chairman of the media company, which owns papers like The Los Angeles Times and The Chicago Tribune. In an interview with CNBC, Soon-Shiong described his investment as an "opportunity to actually transform this newspaper world into this next generation." In 2014, Tribune Publishing Co. was spun out of Tribune Company , which changed its name to Tribune Media Co. Tribune Co. had previously been owned by billionaire real estate investor Sam Zell, who took control of Tribune Co. in 2007. Less than a year later, the company went bankrupt. Four years later, Tribune Co. emerged from bankruptcy after being bought by Oaktree Capital Management, Angelo, Gordon & Co and JPMorgan Chase .

Carlos Slim Helu - The New York Times

The New York Times published an article last Friday criticizing the power that billionaires wield over media companies. One ultra-

wealthy media investor not mentioned in the story: Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helu, who owns the largest individual stake in the Times. Slim more than doubled his stake in The New York Times in June 2015 to approximately 17% of the media company.

Warren Buffett - regional daily papers

Warren Buffett, as CEO of Berkshire Hathaway , has invested in a number of small newspapers and owns about 70 dailies today. In 2012, Berkshire Hathaway acquired 63 daily newspapers and weeklies in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Alabama from Media General for $142 million.

Viktor Vekselberg - Gawker

Russian billionaire Viktor Vekselberg's investment arm, Columbus Nova Technology Partners, bought a minority stake in Gawker in January 2016 for an undisclosed amount. The online media company took outside funding for the first time in anticipation of legal fees incurred by a lawsuit brought by wrestler Hulk Hogan, according to a leaked memo from Gawker founder Nick Denton. Hogan sued Gawker after it published a sex tape. In March a jury awarded Hogan $140 million in damages. Gawker aims to appeal the ruling.

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